



2015-09-22 -Taqiyya encourages Muslims to lie to achieve goals -Washington Post (1001)

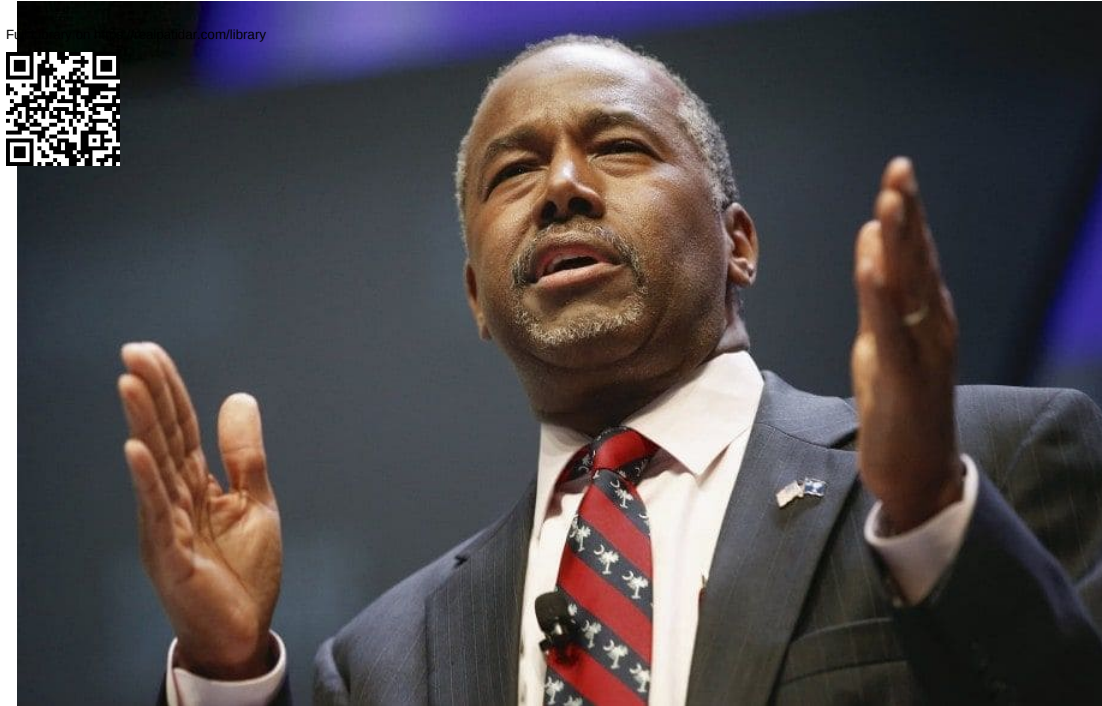
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Ben Carson's claim that 'taqiyya' encourages Muslims 'to lie to achieve your goals'

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(Chris Keane/Reuters)

By [Glenn Kessler](#)

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The Fact Checker

September 22, 2015

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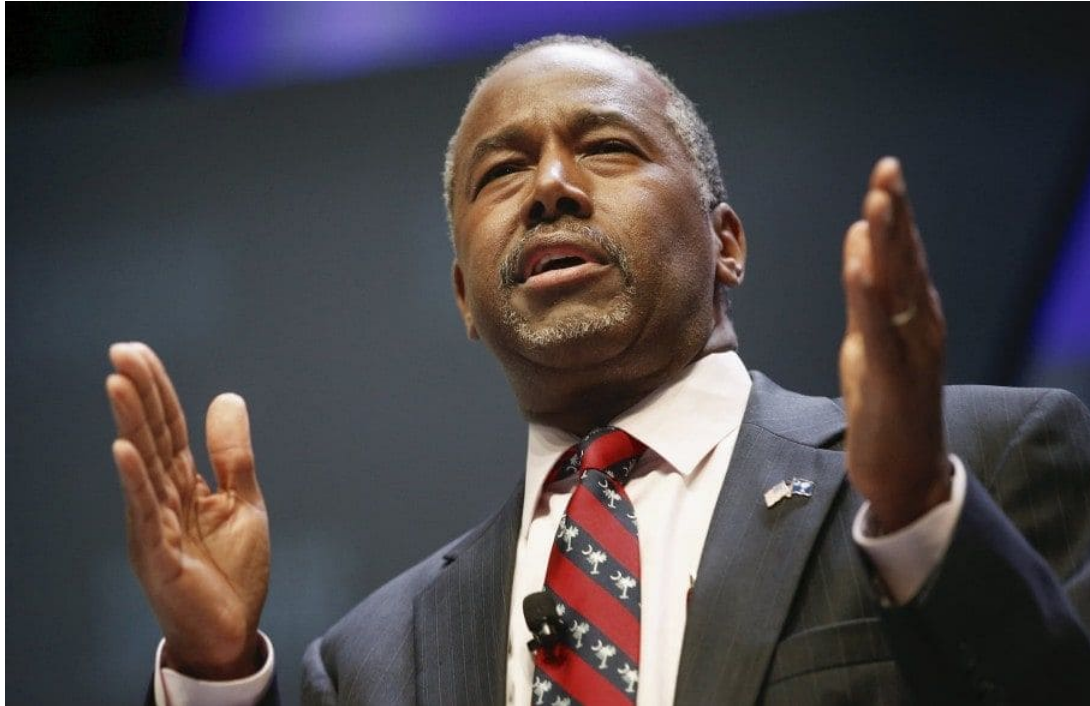


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In a follow-up interview with The Hill, he asserted that he “did not believe Sharia [law] is consistent with the constitution of this country.” He said he could make an exception if the Muslim running for office “publicly rejected all the tenets of Sharia [Islamic law] and lived a life consistent with that.”

But then Carson added he was concerned about something called “taqiyya.” As he put it, “Taqiyya is a component of Sharia that allows, and even encourages you to lie to achieve your goals.” (Note: the Hill newspaper originally quoted Carson as saying “Shia” but later updated it to “Sharia.”)

In other words, he appeared to be saying that this tenet of Islam offered some kind of loophole that would allow the Muslim to lie about his or her religious beliefs in order to pursue other objectives. Is this the case?

The Facts

If you scroll across the Internet, or just stick “taqiyya” into , you will stumble across many videos and articles from groups hostile to Islam arguing that “taqiyya” is central to Islam and permits a Muslim to lie with impunity to nonbelievers. The argument largely stems from two parts of the Koran:

“Whoever expresses disbelief in God after having accepted belief [will suffer greatly] – except him who is forced while his heart is still at peace in belief”
(16:106)

“Let not the believers take unbelievers for their allies in preference to believers. Whoever does this has no connection with God, unless you but guard yourselves against them as a precaution.” (3:28)

But experts in Islamic law say that these Internet scholars have completely corrupted the meaning of the words.

The word “taqiyya” derives from the Arabic words for “piety” and “fear of God” and indicates when a person is in a state of caution, said Khaled Abou El Fadl, a professor of law at the University of California at Los Angeles and a leading authority on Islam.

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Essentially, the Koran suggests that a person who faces religious persecution can withhold the identity of their faith in order to avoid bodily harm or death. The concept was particularly embraced by Shiites, who took steps to hide their religious beliefs from the majority Sunnis. (Indeed, part of the reason for Sunni distrust of Shiites is because Sunnis regard taqiyya as part of Shiite practice.)

But some Sunnis also practiced taqiyya, particularly the Moriscos, Muslims who were forced to convert to Catholicism in Spain during the 1500s.

The concept is also not unknown to other religions. Jews in Spain during the Inquisition also pretended to convert to Catholicism.

“Yes, it is permissible to hide the fact you are Muslim” if a person is under threat, “as long as it does not involve hurting another person,” Abou El Fadl said. “But there is no concept that would encourage a Muslim to lie to pursue a goal. That is a complete invention. Any Muslim is raised on the idea that lying is a sin.”

“It is a dispensation within some aspects of Shia law, which was developed out of the experience of a persecuted religious minority,” said Omid Safi, director of the Duke University Islamic Studies Center. “In brief, it states to value human life over declaration of faith. It is the proverbial question: If a Shia is being persecuted, and someone holds a gun to your head asking ‘are you a Shia?’ you are allowed to say ‘no’ in order to save a human life.”

Another expert on Islamic law, Noah Feldman of Harvard Law School, agreed that Carson’s comment was “very much oversimplified to the point of misrepresentation.” As Feldman put it, “taqiyya is dissimulation when one is being oppressed or tortured or having one’s views banned, a bit like Jesuit dispensation to lie under oath when your life is in danger.”

Safi said “the Taqiyya conversation is today part and parcel of the Islamophobic attack against American Muslims,” in which no matter what a Muslim says, he or she can’t be trusted.

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"If an American Muslim (or Muslim more generally) says that they want to kill Americans, we take them at face value," said Safi as an example of the Catch-22. "If an American Muslim (or Muslims more generally) says that they are committed to American democratic principles and pluralism, we state that they are of course lying, and hoping to achieve nefarious goals."

Hussein Ibish, senior resident scholar at the Arab Gulf States Institute, said that the claim made little sense because Islam is a proselytizing religion, like Christianity. "You're supposed to preach it from the rooftops and the minarets" in order to gain adherents, not keep the religion a secret, he said. Advocates of the alternative version of taqiyya have "dragged a rather obscure and marginal concept out of the corner" to make broad-brush accusations against Muslims, he said.

Abou El Fadl said it "amazes me" that although careful and balanced scholarship on Islam is being done at leading universities by scholars who have learned to read medieval Arabic texts, such research increasingly is ignored in favor of material published by "crazy ideologues, clowns and jokers" who often do not know how to read Arabic.

Doug Watts, a Carson campaign spokesman, declined to point to any possible sources for Carson's claim. "I have scholarly sources as well, but I am not going to get into our usual back and forth on this topic," he said.

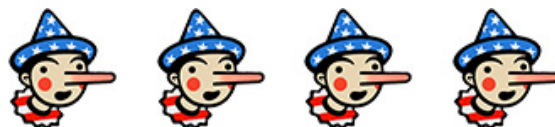
The Pinocchio Test

Carson is mouthing a discredited and inaccurate interpretation of a relatively minor section of the Koran, with the apparent aim of painting all Muslims as untrustworthy. There is no evidence that the Koran encourages Muslims to lie in pursuit of goals. He earns Four Pinocchios.

Four Pinocchios

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